



UNITED STATES SENATE
BUDGET COMMITTEE
RANKING MEMBER CHUCK GRASSLEY

**Prepared Statement by Senator Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa)
Ranking Member, Senate Budget Committee**

**Hearing titled “Cultivating Stewardship: Examining the Changing Agricultural Landscape”
June 7, 2023**

[VIDEO](#)

Today, we’re holding our ninth hearing on climate change. In each of these hearings, I’ve taken an opportunity to remind everybody what the Budget Committee’s about. So, I urge the Committee to focus more on our country’s unsustainable debt and my reminding every opening of this Committee that isn’t going to stop today.

However, I appreciate your holding this bipartisan hearing that will shine a light on actions farmers in Iowa and across the nation are already taking to reduce emissions and improve the environment. Remember, the family farmers of America are only 2 percent of the population. They feed the other 98 percent in America, but they also export about one-third of production, so feeding people elsewhere on this globe.

During my time in the Senate, I’ve discovered that finding a seemingly small area of bipartisan agreement can lead to lasting change for the sake of our constituents. So, Mr. Chairman, I hope today’s base of goodwill and comradery will serve as a springboard for our future work on bipartisan budget process reform.

There are millions of family farmers across the country and 86,000 in Iowa. While they may not ask for it, they deserve a pat on the back from the standpoint of what they do about global warming, and I thank the Chairman for making that very clear in his opening statement.

Iowa has a global reputation as an agricultural powerhouse. We’re a leading producer of pork, corn, soybeans, and eggs. We feed and fuel millions of people around the world. From the farm to the fork, Iowa’s agricultural abundance creates jobs in multiple sectors.

The economic benefits of agriculture are easy to see throughout the food supply chain. But a farmer’s relationship with the environment is often difficult for folks on the west and east coasts to understand. I can tell you from personal experience, as a farmer myself, that farmers are the greatest stewards of their land. They know that it’s good for the land, they know it’s good for future generations, they know it’s good for prosperity. And, it’s the right thing to do.

From the use of no-till, to cover crops, to precision agriculture technologies, farmers have proven that they place the highest priority on a healthy environment.

That’s because farming is often times a family business. And family farms want to make sure that they leave the land better for the next generation than when it was entrusted to their care. Often that next generations comes from within that very family.

The first step to running a sustainable farm is for the farm to at least be able to pay the bills. Only then can a farmer implement practices that reduce emissions and improve soil health.

When government adds red tape to farming operations, it can add cost and in turn reduces the ability for farmers to add sustainable practices.

One of those regulations that EPA's putting out – maybe it'll be halted now because of a recent Supreme Court decision last week – is Waters of the U.S. the Iowa Farm Bureau put out a map during the Obama administration, but it would still be applicable during the Biden administration, that government regulation would affect 97 percent of the land in the state of Iowa. How can you farm if every time you go to the field, you're having to worry about if you're violating some regulation? That's just one example of a lot of government help that farmers don't need if they're going to be prosperous and do for the environment what must be done.

Today's panel is an impressive group from rural America. They illustrate that farmers are actively working to confront the impacts of weather events like flooding and drought.

Moreover, they're a testament to the fact that we can reduce emissions, improve soil conditions, increase crop yield, and yet run successful farming operations at the same time. And, we can do this without destructive government regulations.

I'm going to take the rest of my time to introduce the two Iowans who are here. I probably won't do them justice with my short introduction. But, I want to welcome [Brent Johnson](#). He grows corn and soybeans on his family farm in Calhoun County. He's a precision agriculture expert, agronomist, and certified crop advisor. He also happens to serve as the President of the Iowa Farm Bureau – I've been a member of that organization for longer than you've been alive, 67 years, so I know that it's a good organization and you're going to be a good spokesman for them. He was the 2020 recipient of the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Environmental Leader Award. Few know Iowa farming better than Brent does.

I also welcome Mr. [Bryan Sievers](#), who operates a grain and livestock farm in Scott County. Following two terms in the Iowa State legislature, he commissioned his anaerobic digester system in 2013. It processes beef cattle manure, food waste, and biomass with nutrient dense fertilizer and biogas. He is the Vice-Chair on the American Biogas Council Board of Directors and recently joined Roeslein Alternative Energy to produce renewable natural gas from his digesters. Bryan exemplifies that it takes an innovative, "all of the above" approach to achieve energy security.

The other two people I won't introduce, but I want to welcome you as well.

